Oxford House Inc.
4911 Aurora Drive
Kensington, Maryland 20895
October 31, 1988

Mr. Chris Retan
Aletheia House
P.O. Box 1514
Birmingham, Alabama 35201

Dear Chris:

We are pleased that you have an interest in starting an Oxford House in Birmingham. Yours was the first telephone call as a result of the article in Alcoholism Reports, and therefore the first as a result of the amendment to the drug bill.

We have proven for more than 13 years that alcoholics and drug addicts can live together in a group house, manage their own affairs, and that by so doing the chances of relapse are greatly diminished. The key is the willingness of those in the house to evict anybody who drinks or uses drugs and to pay the bills.

It isn't very complex to start a house. Once a suitable house is located and leased, the secret is to make the leap of faith to turn it over completely to the residents. We started a house in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania over a year ago, away from day-to-day contact with the Washington-area houses. With the Oxford House Manual and their own ingenuity, they are doing nicely and are looking for a way to start a second house.

We have always known the concept could be transferred anywhere. We have also felt that its chances of success would be greatly enhanced in a particular area if we could find a live-wire person to generate interest and watch over start-up. We need people like you to make it happen.

Please let me know if what I can do further. My telephone is still 301-933-6251. I would be nice to visit a house in Birmingham. One of the first times I ever got drunk was the day I took my SAT tests in Birmingham in 1959. I have a lot of ties in your country. My mother was born in Gadsden and grew up in Bessemer. I lived in Cullman for a time in the 50s.

Yours sincerely,

John V. O'Neill